The words “special diet” evoke many meanings but it truly depends on the person who has to follow a special diet as to what it really means. In general, a special diet means an adjustment must be made to the diet to meet a specific need of the body. For example, a student with a peanut allergy must avoid peanuts. He or she has to follow a special peanut-free diet because the consequences of consuming peanuts may be damaging to the body or possibly life-threatening. For those people who are medically-required to follow a special diet, their diet becomes “the norm” and it’s not really that special. However, in a new situation like starting college, they may feel singled out because their diet is different from what others eat.

William and Mary Dining Services believe that all students are special and deserve delicious and healthy foods. The foods prepared for those who require a special diet because of a food allergy/intolerance or celiac disease are the same as other foods just made without specific ingredients. Dining Services wants all students who eat in the dining halls to feel included and secure about the foods they eat. The students want to know their needs are being met and even if their need is to be devoid of all gluten, the dining halls have options for them.

If you follow a special diet, the following are options available in the dining halls:

**Simple Servings**
Simple Servings is a resident dining option that provides safe and appetizing food choices for students with food allergies/intolerances or celiac disease, or for those who prefer plain and simple foods. The Simple Servings station offers delicious foods that are made with ingredients that do not contain the FDA’s most common allergens: peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, wheat, soy, milk products and eggs. All of the foods offered are also made without gluten-containing ingredients. Some fin fish dishes may be included in the varied menu options as a healthy protein choice, along with beef, pork, chicken, turkey and vegetarian options. For added benefit, the menu changes at every lunch and dinner meal.

The staff of the Simple Servings stations takes preparing safe foods very seriously. They receive on-going training to ensure they are up-to-date on what it takes to keep a station safe from allergens and gluten.

**Mindful**
Does eating healthy mean you follow a special diet? No, everyone should make healthy food choices every day. Depending on current health status, some may have to follow a healthy diet and some may simply want to.

Healthy food options are numerous in the menu options every day. Throughout the dining halls you may see the word “Mindful” or you may see the green apple logo. These food options are lower in calorie, total fat, saturated fat and sodium but are full of flavor. Mindful makes choosing the healthy choice, the easy choice. Mindful foods balance nutrition with enticing flavors to create an indulgent way to enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

**Vegan/Vegetarian**
The number of students who consume a plant-based diet is growing for reasons such as health, ethical, environmental and religious, to name a few. No matter the reason, both dining halls have a vegan station to prepare and provide an abundant supply of whole grains, vegetables, fruits and plant-protein sources to create a balanced meal. We often see students who are not vegan or vegetarian grabbing some delicious choices from the station. Stop in at Maize in Sadler Center Court or the Vegan station in the Caf to find some great vegan options as well as the newest edition of vegan desserts and smoothies!
Breakfast: The Most Important Meal of the Day

You’ve heard this since you were a kid but before you decide to skip the article, read on. The positive effects of healthy foods and adequate sleep on cognition and learning cannot be overstated. Breakfast is the best way to start your day in a healthy way. If you’ve been asleep for at least 7 – 8 hours, your body is ready for that boost to get it through the busy day you have ahead of learning, creating, exercising, and socializing. Not only does breakfast help to refuel your body after a nights rest, it may also help to reduce your risks for certain diseases like heart disease or type 2 diabetes as well as help you to maintain a healthy weight. Two additional benefits of breakfast are increased concentration and increased energy. These are two benefits that all students should be interested in.

Concentration: A healthy, well-balanced breakfast can help to fuel the brain. In fact, research suggests that breakfast may help to improve brain function, specifically memory and recall. Research has also shown that students who eat breakfast make better grades, though the researchers can’t explain why. For most college students, the previous two sentences alone would be enough to start the day with a healthy meal.

Energy: Have you ever fallen asleep in class? Two things can affect your energy level – sleep and breakfast. Your morning meal is an easy step to take to reenergize your body and mind. Energy sustaining, nutritious foods like oatmeal; yogurt with granola or fruit; or whole grain cereal with low-fat milk can help to keep you awake in class and throughout your day!

When you’re in the dining hall at breakfast, opt for oatmeal, yogurt, eggs, whole wheat bread, granola, low-fat milk, peanut butter, soy milk, or any of the healthier cereals like the Kashi brand flavors. Always include carbohydrate-containing foods like fruit, oatmeal or whole wheat bread; protein-containing foods like eggs or peanut butter; and dairy like milk, soy milk or yogurt. Including a carbohydrate, protein and diary in appropriate portion sizes will provide nutrients your body needs and keep you from overeating at your next meal.

Nutrient Spotlight - Carbohydrates

Over the past several years we’ve heard contradicting and confusing information about carbohydrates. Some say avoid it completely, some say it’s fine in small amounts and some say it’s all crazy. Nutrition professionals are bombarded daily with the questions about carbohydrate consumption. The strongest research shows that we shouldn’t avoid them, and limiting them isn’t really necessary either, however, that, of course, depends on the carbohydrate-containing food and the individual asking the question. The fact is carbohydrate is the body’s main energy source. The body can get energy from protein and fat but it isn’t nearly as efficient as it is from carbohydrates. Once digestion starts to break down carbohydrate to glucose, the glucose is used for energy for physical activity, for walking from one class to another and even for basic needs like your heart to beat, lungs to breathe and brain to think. The brain actually prefers glucose for energy. It will work with other substrates for energy but not as efficiently. Carbohydrates are needed in the body, but the types of carbohydrate-containing foods we typically eat may be the reason so many jump on a “no carb” bandwagon. Because we are all different in regards to height, weight, activity level, age and health needs, the amount of carbohydrates needed in a day will vary.

Carbohydrate-containing foods contain the most food groups. Any food containing starch or sugar is considered a carbohydrates-containing food. Starchy foods include rice, cereal, pasta, breads, grains, chips, and crackers. It also includes starchy vegetables like beans, potatoes, corn and green peas. The sugar foods include all fruits and fruit juices as well as dairy products like milk and yogurt. Fruit contains a natural sugar called fructose and milk/yogurt contains a natural sugar called lactose. Other sugary foods are those containing refined sugars such as soda’s, energy drinks, cookies, cakes, candy, etc. To make sure you make the healthiest carbohydrate choices, choose fruits, starchy vegetables, low-fat dairy, and whole grains. Avoid foods made with processed, refined grain products like baked goods, snacks, crackers, and avoid sugary foods like candies or regular sodas.
Creating a Healthy Plate

How do you know if you’re meeting your nutritional needs? Besides keeping track of every nutrient you consume, an easy way is to use MyPlate from the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture). In 2011, MyPlate replaced MyPyramid and was designed to help people plan a balanced diet by providing a more realistic look at how they can meet their nutritional needs for the day.

The plate is a visual of the five food groups: Grains, Proteins, Vegetables, Fruits, and Dairy. By visiting the MyPlate website (figure 1) you can find a plethora of information about each nutrient, food sources, and fantastic handouts than can be used on bulletin boards or to share with your friends (http://www.choosemyplate.gov/college-resources).

The best part is how the site can also help you with your daily food plan (Figure 2) using the SuperTracker page. Once you set up a free account, you can create a profile with your age, gender, height and weight. It will develop a meal plan for you with options to help you meet your goals. Keep in mind that the website’s caloric level and nutrient recommendations for the meal plan are somewhat generic. We are all individuals and may need more specific nutrient intake so if you are an athlete or are interested in a more individualized plan, contact the Campus Dietitian, Julie Nance, at jnance@wm.edu.

Quick dining guide using MyPlate

**Breakfast**
- Lean proteins – boiled/scrambled eggs
- Grains – grits, oatmeal, whole wheat/whole grain bread
- Dairy – 1% or skim milk, low-fat chocolate milk, soymilk, almond milk (by request), yogurt
- Vegetables – vegetables are available in the omelet station
- Fruit – seasonal fruit such as bananas, oranges, apples

**Lunch and Dinner**
- Lean proteins – grilled chicken, turkey burgers, vegetarian burgers, seafood, tofu, peanut butter
- Grains – brown rice, whole wheat pasta, or quinoa, barley or farro dishes
- Vegetables – baked sweet potato, salads, or steamed, sautéed or roasted vegetables
- Fruit – Bananas, apples, oranges or any seasonal fruit
- Dairy – Milk, soymilk, yogurt, cheese

**Making Healthy Choices Easier**

Mindful is a great tool to connect both nutrition and physical activity in an effort to develop a healthier lifestyle! Campus dining has paired with MyFitnessPal® to give users access to the nutrition information for meals served in the dining halls. This allows you to easily access the nutrition facts with a touch of a finger! All you have to do is download the MyFitnessPal® app and use the barcode reader to scan the barcodes located on the menus throughout the service areas!

Look for these helpful Mindful logos to help you identify healthier choices!

For more information about Mindful, Simple Servings, Vegan stations or any other nutrition information, contact the campus dietitian at specialdiets@wm.edu or by calling 757-221-4872.